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"According to the wind," the captain replied,  
"And I have an idea that this trip will be a lucky one," the boatswain put in.

Fritz, Frank, and John Block had already done all but the impossible in their attempts to scale the promontory. They had got about two hundred feet up, although the gradient was very steep, by slipping from one rock to the next in the very middle of a torrent of landslides, with the agility of chamois or ibex; but a third of the way up they had come to a stop. It had been a highly dangerous attempt, and the boatswain had come within an ace of breaking some of his bones\*

But from that point all their attempts to continue the ascent were in vain. The promontory ended here in a vertical section with a smooth surface, There was not a foothold anywhere, not the tiniest projection on which the boat's ropes might have been caught. And they were still six or seven hundred feet from the top of the cliff.

When they returned to the cave Captain Gould explained the decision which had been reached.

Two days hence, on the 27th of October, the boat

.was to leave her moorings to go along  
the coast.  
Had a trip of several days' duration  
been involved,  
everybody would have gone in the  
boat, But  
as only a general reconnaissance was  
contemplated,  
&e thought it would be better that only  
he should